

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of the present application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 18-23 are pending in this application. Claims 9-17 are cancelled.

Claims 1, 5, 18 and 19 are amended herein. Unless an argument is made below relating to a particular change to one of these claims to overcome a prior art rejection, these changes to the claims do not relate to patentability.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 9, 10 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, on the grounds that the coupling of a motor to the door and de-coupling of the motor from the door are not clearly pointed out or shown. These claims are cancelled without prejudice to prosecuting the subject matter of these claims in a continuation application.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-8 and 18-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kawanobe et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,134,837). The Examiner takes a position that Kawanobe et al. describes a door holding system including all of the features of the claims.

The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that Kowall et al. does not disclose apparatus and methods including all of the features of independent claims 1, 5, 18, 19, 22 and 23.

Claims 1-3 and 20

Claim 1 is amended to include the feature of an infinite door check mechanism coupled to the door and which enables the door to be moved from a closed position in the door frame to any one of a plurality of different laterally open positions in which the space between a lateral edge of the door and an edge of the door frame against which the lateral edge of the door is positioned when the door is situated in the door frame is varied and maintained in any of the plurality of different laterally open positions in the absence of applied force to hold the door in the position.

In the claimed embodiment of the invention, the infinite door check mechanism is designed to allow a user to open the door with varying degrees of force with the door being movable to any position upon application of the opening force. That is, the person opening the door can apply sufficient force to open the door halfway at which point, the door will stop. This occurs in the absence of applied force to

hold the door in that position. Thus, even though resistance to the opening movement of the door is not detected, the door stops since the opening force is not sufficient to open the door entirely.

The Examiner points to electromagnetic clutch 56 in Kawanobe et al. to constitute an infinite door check mechanism.

However, clutch 56 does not enable the door to be maintained in any of a plurality of different laterally open position in the absence of an applied force. Rather, it is the detected resistance to the movement of the door which results in stoppage of the door. Thus, this is not an infinite door check mechanism as set forth in claim 1.

Accordingly, since Kawanobe et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest an infinite door check mechanism as set forth in claim 1, it cannot anticipate or render obvious claim 1 or claims 2, 3 and 20 which depend upon claim 1.

Claims 5-7 and 21

Claim 5 is amended to include the feature of maintaining the door in any one of a plurality of different laterally open positions in the absence of applied force to hold the door in that position. Thus, the door can be opened with varying degrees of force to position the door at any open position without requiring the application of a resistive force to stop the movement of the door.

Kawanobe et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest maintaining a door in an open position in the absence of a force holding the door in that position. Rather, Kawanobe et al. stop the door upon detecting an obstacle which inherently creates a force to hold the door in the open position.

Since Kawanobe et al. does not include all of the features of claim 5, it cannot anticipate or render obvious claim 5 or claims 6, 7 and 21 which depend upon claim 5.

Claims 4, 8, 22 and 23

Claims 4, 8, 22 and 23 relate to a particular technique for detecting resistance to the opening movement of a sliding door, namely, a pressure sensor arranged on the door and having a pressure sensitive surface oriented in the direction in which the door moves during the opening movement thereof. By touching the pressure sensitive surface, resistance is applied to the door causing the opening movement of the door to be stopped. Fig. 24 shows a pressure sensor 40 arranged along the edge of the door which is the forward edge during the forwardly, opening movement of the door. The application of pressure to sensor 40 is effective to stop the opening movement of the door (see the specification at page 35, lines 22-24).

The Examiner points to switches 19, 20 in Kawanobe et al. as being arranged “at the door” and having a pressure sensitive surface oriented in the direction of opening of the door.

In contrast to the Examiner's position, switches 19, 20 are not arranged on the door but rather are arranged at the driver's seat and at the rear seat (col. 6, lines 15-18). There is also no teaching or suggestion in Kawanobe et al. to provide these switches on the door and orienting the switches to have a pressure sensitive surface in the direction in which the doors opens.

In fact, one skilled in the art would not consider positioning the switches 19, 20 in this manner because the switches would have to be placed between the door and the frame when the door is closed, in which case they would not be accessible when the door is closed. That is, in the invention, the pressure sensor is used when it is desired to stop an opening movement of the door, once the door already begins its opening movement, and not to initiate the opening movement of the door. As such, the pressure sensor is arranged along the forward-facing edge of the door when the door opens in a forward direction and this edge is concealed when the door is closed. Arranging the switches 19, 20 of Kawanobe et al. in this position would clearly frustrate the purposes of the switches to initiate opening or closing movement, making it impossible to access the switches when the door is closed, so that one skilled in the art would not consider placing the switches 19, 20 of Kawanobe et al. in the same position as in the claimed embodiments of the invention.

Since Kawanobe et al. does not disclose a pressure sensor as set forth in claims 4, 8, 22 and 23, it cannot anticipate or render obvious the embodiments of the invention set forth in these claims.

Claims 18 and 19

Claims 18 and 19 are directed to a technique for limiting access to a vehicle to only an authorizer used by arranging a sensor on the vehicle to cause a radio frequency identification device (RFID) to emit a signal indicative of the presence of the authorized individual and receive the emitted signal.

The Examiner points out that Kawanobe et al. describes a keyless system 21 which receives a remote open signal or close signal from a wireless remote switch.

In contrast to Kawanobe et al., the sensor in accordance with the invention differs from a keyless switch in that it is not a switch but rather is an RFID device which, as known to those skilled in the art, does not require any activation or depression by the authorized individual to cause signal emission. Rather, the mere presence of the RFID device in the operative field of the sensor causes signal emission. The recognition of the presence of an authorized individual to access the vehicle is therefore completely automatic in the invention without any involvement by the individual. He or she simply approaches the vehicle and when carrying the RFID device, the vehicle's doors open.

Appl. No. 10/657,547 *
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Thus, Kawanobe et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest a sensor or a detection step as set forth in claims 18 and 19 and therefore cannot anticipate or render obvious the embodiments of the invention set forth in these claims.

Conclusion


In view of the arguments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-8 and 18-23 as being anticipated by Kawanobe et al. has been overcome and should be removed and that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

Petition for Extension

Applicants hereby petition for a one-month extension of time to extend the time for response to the Office Action for one month from February 16, 2005 to March 16, 2005. The petition fee of \$60.00, applicant having qualified for small entity status, should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0266.

An early and favorable action on the merits upon entry and consideration of this amendment is earnestly solicited.

FOR THE APPLICANT
Respectfully submitted,


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